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UNITED NATIONS
Economic Commission for Africa

"ONE DAY IN HER LIFE"
A DAY IN THE LIFE OF AN AFRICAN WOMAN

by
Sharon A. Billings, Lutheran World Relief
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INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULAR PARTICIPATION IN THE RECOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS IN AFRICA

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a day in the life of an African woman 1/

Ah, is it really time for me to rise? I feel as if I've only just lay down my head. But I need to get up; I have so much to do before the sun rises. I hope that I have some water left over from last night so that I can wash - Ah yes, there is some here. But there is no time to enjoy it and besides it is so cold. Careful now, I need to leave enough for my husband and my children to wash. If my children go to school without washing then people will say that I fail to take care of my family. Now, quickly, I must light the fire for it brings heat, light is a sign that there is life in this house. While my husband's water is warming on the fire I will sweep the kitchen and outside area and tend to the chickens and goats. Here are several eggs. I can sell them in the market today. (**pause**) Wake up, children, wake up, for the sun is beginning to rise. Bring the baby here; he is hungry and his crying will disturb your father. Here, help me to gather the gourds and buckets. Place those dirty dishes in this basket; we will wash them at the river. Fanta, my daughter, I have warmed some food for you and your brother. Don't forget to eat and wash before you go to school. And please pay close attention in your classes, for it is very important that you learn. Come, little ones, let's go to the river. (**pause**) If my daughter was not at school she could help me with my burdens but I am willing to sacrifice for her education. I stood up to my husband and his family when they said that it was not necessary for her to go to school. I think it is, I want her to learn, I want her life to be better than mine. Maybe she will go to the city and find a job and she will not have to do the things I do. For here the sun is only just rising and I have been up for over an hour already. And it will take another hour just to collect the water and return home. Sometimes I wonder how I ever manage to get everything done. Well, here we are at the river and the sun is rising quickly. I have wasted time by thinking and dreaming; there is no time for such things in my life. Hurry children, fill these containers while I wash these dishes. (**pause**) Alright, let's return now. (**long pause**).

I have returned home and have fixed the morning meal for my husband and the smaller children. After the children ate I sent them to the house of my mother-in-law to play. They are still too young to help me in my work. Now I have gathered the basket which I filled last night with peanuts, okra and tomatoes, have added the eggs which I collected this morning and I am walking to the market with my baby. I hope it does not take too long to sell these things or to trade them for some dried fish and salt. Maybe I will even buy some fruit today. But I must be careful to get a good price for my products and to save some money for the school fees which are due next week. I have almost enough for one child but I must save some more or else I can only afford to send my son to school. And I must send my daughter also! (**long pause**) Hush now, my baby, what is wrong? Can you be hungry still? Lately you have not been satisfied with the milk I can give you. I can't seem to produce enough to fill you. I remember that the nurse at the health centre said that I should take some medicine because my blood was poor. Can that affect my milk? But I can't afford any medicine.

1/ Performed for the first time by actress Christine Campbell at the second Symposium of the Advocates for African Food Security Lessening the Burden of Women, 14 May 1987, New York.

And besides, the health centre is 15 kilometres away and I will have to stand in a long line. The last time I went there I finished too late to return home and had to sleep there. Here I am at home again. I will have to think about this later. **(pause)** I will leave some peanuts and the fruit for the noon meal for my school children but I have no time to eat. I must hurry to the fields for the sun is already high and I must weed my maize field and then go to weed my husband's cotton field. I know that weeding is considered a job only for women but I never have the chance to do a complete job in my field, in which our food grows because I have to work in his field of cotton. And when the cotton is sold, I see very little of the money. Which is more important: food or cotton? You can't eat cotton! But what am I to do? And now my husband has been sick for a few days and I must work even harder. **(long pause)**

Well, the sun is beginning to go down and I better leave the field because today I must go to gather wood since my supply is low. We used to be able to cut the wood at the edge of the village but now some of that land has been cleared to plant more cotton. And the chief has declared the rest of the closest trees to be a reserve so we cannot cut them. Of course they did not consult with the women before they made such a decision. Now we have to pass right by this reserve in order to gather wood. It really doesn't make sense to me. Oh, today I spent too much time in the field and it's getting late. Well, I don't see anyone around. Maybe I can just sneak in here and collect some of the branches that probably fell during the storms of the last few days. Yes, here are a few. It's not much but I can't carry very much anyway since I have the baby and I also have to stop by the garden to gather some things to sell tomorrow in the weekly market in our neighbouring village. My vegetables are always in demand there and I know that I can get enough money to pay for my daughter's school fees and maybe even to buy her a new uniform since her old one has become much too small. I must do all that I can to keep her in school. It's my responsibility. **(pause)** Ah, and there she is, my Fanta, coming to meet me and to help me with my burdens. I am glad because the sun is quickly falling and I should start the preparations for the evening meal. The traditional doctor is coming tonight to help my husband. We think he has been poisoned by an enemy who hopes to gain some of his land. The meal must be finished before the doctor comes so that I can prepare whatever medicine he brings with him. **(pause)**

Now we are at home but what is this? The water has been finished. Doesn't this family realize how far away the river is? Well, we have no choice. Quickly, Fanta, gather the little ones and we will go to the river. Here, take these gourds. Hurry now, time is passing! You little ones, run ahead and wash in the river; you have gotten so dirty today. **(pause)** Stop playing, children, fill your gourds and let's go. **(pause)** What's the matter with you, my child? Why are you stumbling? Are you sick? Ah, you have a high fever! It must be the malaria returning. Here, Fanta, take the baby and I will carry him. Just dump out his water, we'll do with less tonight. This means I will have to take him to the health centre tomorrow. And what I sell tomorrow will have to pay for the medicine. I hope the line at the health centre is short for there is so much to be done. **(pause)**

Ah, I see that my husband is already home. I hope he will understand why his meal will be a little late. Take your brother to the house to lay

down and I will brew him some tea while I cut the vegetables. The sun is almost gone. I'm glad that I was able to pound some extra maize yesterday so I have only a little to pound today. Alright children, please play quietly for both your father and brother are sick. Yes, I know that you are hungry. But you have to wait until I am finished cooking. **(pause)** Alright children, your meal is ready, come and eat. Where are the younger children? Have they gone to sleep already? Wake up and eat. How can these little ones grow strong if they are already sleeping by the time I am able to finish cooking? Then they must be woken up and forced to eat. No wonder this one is sick and the others are weak. Please, Fanta, help me to feed them because I can't let anyone else get sick!

The doctor has come and has confirmed our suspicions that my husband was poisoned. I am boiling a special potion for him. Meanwhile, I have also boiled some fever grass for my sick child and he has gone to sleep. **(long pause)** Finally, everyone is asleep and the house is quiet. But for me, the day is not yet over. I must prepare a meal for tomorrow that my daughter can warm up because I don't know when I'll be back from the health centre. And what about this meat that my friend brought to me this evening? I guess I should smoke it now because I won't have time to do it tomorrow and if I wait for the next day, it will spoil. I will be happy when my husband's brother's widowed wife comes to live in our compound with her children. We can help one another with the work and her children are older and so can also work with us. Maybe I'll even have time to go to a meeting with some of the other women. Then I will also have a chance to wear that new dress that my husband bought for me. Or perhaps I'll even have time to go to that literacy class. I wonder if I can still learn to read and write? **(pause)** It would be so nice to share my work. I am always <u>so</u> tired...

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WOMEN PARTICIPATION AT THE HEART OF AFRICA'S RECOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT

by

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UNICEF Ethiopia

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I. AN OVERVIEW

The 1980s have pointed to the fact that in many parts of the world, life is not getting better; in fact, matters are getting worse. In Africa, matters got so bad that Africa has been declared a continent in crisis. If one looks at economic trends for major regions of the world, it is clear that Africa, which was at the bottom of economic performance at the start of the 1980s, has gotten progressively worse; the gap between Africa and other regions has become inceasingly larger.

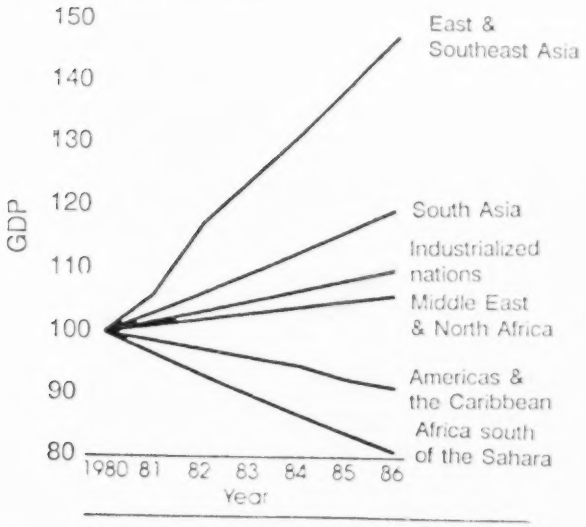
If one looks at the decrease in infant and child mortality rates, one finds that the steep decline in these rates began to level off in the 1970s and by the 1980s had practically levelled off.

It is worth noting that countries of Africa south of the Sahara are not included in these selected countries, probably because data was not readily available for inclusion, a serious symptom of our underdevelopment and of a continent in crisis. A look at the basic data, as that presented in UNICEF's State of the World's Children 1989 (supplementary chapter on Measuring real development, pp. 88-89) shows that African countries south of the Sahara form the majority of those countries with the highest under-five mortality rate categories. In fact, no countries south of the Sahara are in the category of low under-five mortality rates as can be seen in annex I. Given these high under-five mortality rates, one would expect a continued steep decline in order for these countries to reach the lower limits attained by other countries so that if levelling occurs, it occurs because of the difficulty to achieve further reduction due to the nature of complicated health problems. But in Africa, the levelling is taking place while infant mortality rates (IMR) are still over 100 per 1000 live births; some countries have IMR rates of over 150. The levelling off is therefore a sad commentary on the stagnation and decline of the social development. These are symptoms of the economic decline sub-Saharan Africa has been experiencing, as is shown in the figure (Africa's decline).

Economic trends

The chart shows what happened to economic development in the major regions of the world during the 1980's

Gross domestic product per capita, by region of the world, 1980-1986 (1980 = 100)

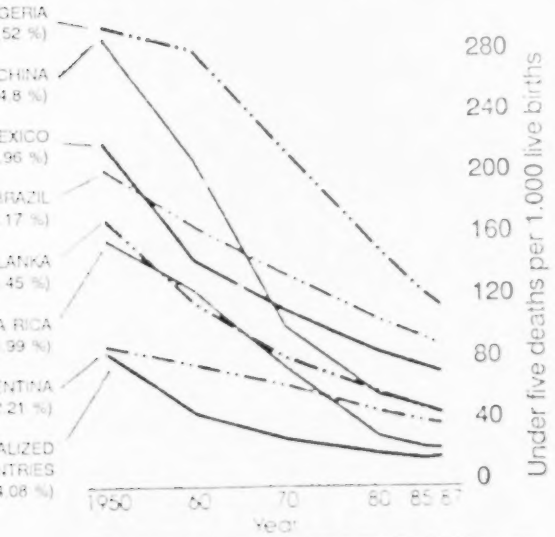


Source: Children in a global context. Report of the Executive Director, United Nations Children's Fund, 18 Feb 1988

From State of the World's Children 1989 page 3

Falling child deaths

Declines in under-five mortality rates, 1950-87, selected countries



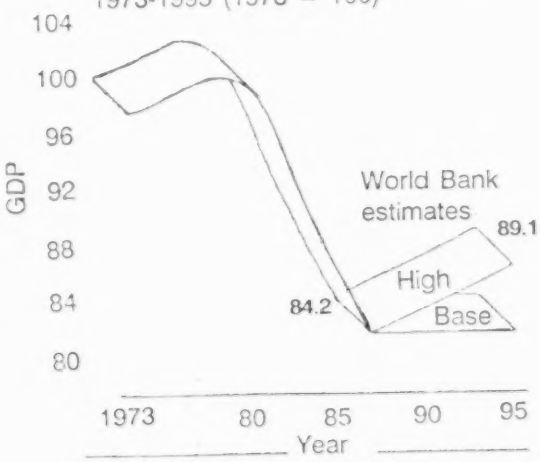
The figure in prentheses is the average annual reduction rate between 1950 and 1987.

From State of the World's Children 1989 page 83

Africa's decline

The graph shows the decline of per capita GDP in sub-Saharan Africa during the 1970s and 1980s and the World Bank estimates for economic growth in the region to the mid-1990s.

GDP per capita, Sub-Saharan Afica, 1973-1995 (1973 = 100)



Source: World Bank

From State of the World's Children 1989 page 21

In Africa's Submission to the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on Africa's Economic and Social Crisis, the African Ministers stated:

> "We, the African Ministers for Foreign Affairs and the Ministers responsible for Economic Development and Planning, having convened in Addis Ababa from 28 to 31 March 1986 for the extraordinary meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity and for the extraordinary session of the Conference of Ministers of the Economic Commission for Africa and, acting for and on behalf of all the Governments and peoples of Africa, have made a careful assessment of the rapid deterioration of the social and economic conditions in our region and do hereby, in accordance with Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery adopted at the twenty-first Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity, present to the special session of the United Nations General Assembly on Africa's economic situation this our submission on Africa's economic and social crisis."

> "We continue to be gravely concerned by the profound crisis in our social and economic structures. We recognise that this not only jeopardizes the development process of our economies but also the very survival of millions of our people ... (this) has strengthened us in our conviction that it is necessary for our Governments, individually and collectively, to take immediate, concerned and urgent actions to ensure harmonious economic and social development of our countries."

However, UNICEF has undertaken studies which show that even in this gloomy picture, deterioration can be halted. Annex II shows that even though there has been negative growth in GNP, there has continued to be positive changes with respect to child morality. Even if these are minimal positive indications, they are reason for hope. They indicate that concerted efforts, such as those UNICEF has been advocating for Child Survival and Development and Adjustment with a Human Face can and do cushion the impact of the economic disaster being experienced.

It is clear that many African elites are 'making it', individually or as family units. But the success of the individual is meaningful only to the extent that it reflects the success of the group. Sometimes a picture presents itself to me in which a medical doctor is neatly dressed in a spotlessly white (professional) coat with a stethoscope hanging from his neck while he is standing in a muddy swamp up to his waist. If you ask people who see this medical doctor what they see, what will they say? Will they say they see a medical doctor in a white coat? I doubt it. They will say they see a person stuck in the mud. The situation of the group affects how the individual is perceived.

In the current deteriorating situation in Africa, we in Africa are stuck in the mud as a group. I would go so far as saying we in the human race on this planet are stuck in the mud together. Our individual successes are marred as they do not reflect the success of the group. We must drain the swamp together so that the successful person becomes visible in a positive light.

II. LACK OF PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION IN THE PAST DECADES OF DEVELOPMENT AND THE CONSEQUENCES

In the analysis of what has brought Africa to the crisis in which it is, many variables come up. One that I believe does not get sufficient attention is the fact that in the development activities of the 1960s and 1970s the majority of African people were left out of the thinking, let alone the decision-making. A few Africans, backed up by a few external supporters, determined the development path. They felt they know what was best for the people of Africa. There was little attempt at consensus making on the development path to be followed. There was no dialogue. Even where there were/are parliaments, these have become, for the most part, rubber-stamping houses, not places to seek genuine solutions. The vote gets pushed through by the few that want a particular legislation. The people are stampeded into "development" that has turned out to be a crisis of basic survival.

The sad part is that those who have been pushing through the vote quite often did so believing truly and sincerely that they were "doing the best for the people of Africa". They had good intentions. They believed that they, the handful, knew what was best for the entire people of Africa. In the process, there was discounting of centuries of experience that has held Africa together. In the process of the stampede, mistakes were made in the development choices. Perhaps the worst consequences of leaving the majority of the people out was that, even when good decisions were made there was no effort to establish a "connectedness" with the people, to relate what was being chosen to where the people were and thus facilitate the process of internalization whereby people would think through the chosen path and be part of it and thus facilitate the evolution of a responsive mind frame for dealing with new situations that would help enhance a self-correcting process. Because people did not "connect" with what was happening, the people have simply watched what, to them, have been haphazard unrelated activities. In some countries even one regime did not "connect" with what the previous regime was doing! The African scene has thus been full of disconnected activities. Many new governments have departed from what was going on previously without a thorough analysis of what it was they were offering beyond grabbing power. The bypassing of the people in this process has meant that the "development outlook" of the colonial times has been retained and has been further entrenched. People have been made to "wait for answers from those who know". And they have been waiting for a long time! This has, in many situations, killed the local initiatives in a search for what needs to be done. It has made impossible the evolution of self-correcting responsive approaches to problem solving.

The saddest part is that many African leaders and even intellectuals as well as "development" workers still act as if they alone have the answers. Sometimes they proclaim publicly "I don't know all the answers" but proceed to act and set in motion decision-making processes that say, loud and clear, "I alone know the answers". All discussion is seen as "opposition" and therefore negative and "unpatriotic". New types of "kings" have emerged and propagate the myth that the African way is the way of the tyrant. Yet well-known anthropologists, such as British-born Louis Leakey of Kenya have written

on Africa before the 1900s and shown that the pattern in our villages was the pattern of governing councils of men and women, elders whose central mandate was deciding together in consensus-seeking discussion. They listened even to the lone dissenting voices "in case the Great Spirit should choose to reveal to only one of us the path for the survival of all of us". They listened and discussed all possible perspectives in the group and then as a group chose a path. And the choice was binding. And the council became accountable to the people for their joint decision. These days it seems once one person, maybe with some "friends" have thought through a matter this entitles them to impose their "careful thought" on everyone else, discounting the possibility that others, too, are thinking carefully and dismissing listening to others. Yet the answers that are needed might emerge from a synthesis of all the careful thinking if only decision-making was more broad-based.

When there is no involvement of the people in decision-making and there is no understanding of the rationale of what is being done, the basis for accountability of decision-makers to the people is lost. This gives a clean slate to "those who know" to do what they want. And when countries land in a mess, "those who know" are nowhere to explain! And to make it worse, they do not show that they feel accountable for their decisions by any indication of contrition for having wronged the people.

When decision-makers act as if public concerns are private and personal, they establish private decision-making procedures and there is no basis for accountability. And this lack of accountability of our leaders to the people is a major obstacle to developing a participatory approach to decision making. Unfortunately, this lack of accountability to the people goes down the line right from very high levels to workers at the periphery who see no reason to enter into dialogue with the people as they only pay attention to themselves and those who pay their salaries, feeling some accountability only for those who actually pay salaries, forgetting that in most cases the money is taxes from the people they ignore. There has thus risen a great confusion between the concepts of power and authority. Those who consider themselves powerful and are in positions to exercise power hardly ever realize that they may not have authority, that their exercise of power is by intimidation not only by consent. For authority can only be earned and given by the people freely. It cannot be grabbed. And while the people continue to be left out, no basis is being established for accountability to the people and the authority that derives from that.

III. RATIONALE FOR THE PARTICIPATORY APPROACH

A. Establishing a common base

In a genuine participatory approach, it is not possible to have one-person shows. At the heart of the participatory process is consensus-seeking and consensus-building. This takes time, hence one reason for it not being popular. We are in a hurry. We do not want to "waste time". And we continue to fail to realize that the worst form of wasting time is rushing through decisions, getting what the boss wants done and then landing a whole people in a crisis requiring decades to crawl out. African leaders and development

planners must go back to consensus-seeking. It is sad to note that because of "fear of opposition" there is much secrecy in decision-making in the public sector of many African countries. When a voice asks "why" or "why that?", it is automatically branded as "anti-development" or "unpatriotic" or "self-seeking" or whatever! It is branded as "the opposition" in "the pockets of foreign masters". The leadership in Africa must realize that Africa belongs to all Africans. Africa belongs especially to the people who cannot run out when the going gets rough. Most Africans who ask "why" are not in the pockets of foreign masters. People want to participate because it is important, it is their life, their country, their continent. No one individual has the answers to all challenges. The few need to come off the high pedestal and come down to seek with the people what we need to do. Africans in all levels of decision-making position need to listen to each other and to further listen to the people in a genuine search for getting the best out of everyone instead of some believing that only the few and their few cronies know it all. This is particularly crucial as most African countries have adopted one-party systems thus taking away the opportunity for the airing of other views in a serious forum demanding attention. Oh yes, one hears a lot about people's participation in Africa. When people are called to be given "instructions" and directives over which they may have no choice in many countries, their presence to receive these directives is seen as evidence of participation. Could anything be further from the truth?

Since the overall atmosphere in Africa does not lend itself to a participatory approach, women, especially village women can be assumed to have no say. For even their husbands have no say on these "big" things. The decision-making process needs to be expanded. Africa is not making maximum use of the natural intelligence obtained from the experience nor the "educated intelligence" available in the countries. There is an urgent need to go back to this basic principal in order to even think of women participating. For in the current atmosphere, the majority, not only women, are being suffocated. How can participation occur?

B. Learning to listen

It is not possible to be part of a participatory approach unless one learns to listen to others in a serious and sincere way. It is surprising how difficult this is for most people - even those who talk of "participation". How easy it is to bring together people for "participation" and then proceed to dish out the answers! If the leadership is serious about participation, it can monitor its seriousness by how much listening becomes part of the style of that leadership. And not listening as a manipulative tool for putting people down once you understand what they say but listening in the genuine belief that they, too, have their story, their contribution. And that out of this listening to each other, answers would emerge. Listening to each other is one attribute that was part of the African heritage which is being lost and which needs to be re-established. In recent decades, African decision-makers have relied on getting "advisors" from elsewhere and then proceeding to "feed" the people what these advisers "feed" them at the exclusion of their people's views. We need to listen to each other, and especially to actively seek ways of listening to the people as well as to the textbooks prepared at other times from other people's experiences. We must include the people for whom we seek the answers.

One benefit of the habit of listening to others around you is the development of an internal orientation to the realization that you do not have all the answers and you alone need not feel you have to provide all the answers. Whether one is dealing with problems as big as those facing Africa on a continental scale or the survival problems at the village level, one can be in a desperate situation if one puts all these problems on one's shoulders with the view of being the one to provide the answers. All need to realize that this is not possible. The orientation must be that together with the people we shall find the answers or genuinely accept partial answers. And we can only search together in a meaningful way if we listen to each other. Each of us has a part of The Light. We need not undermine The Light in ourselves and in each other as we grope for a path of meaningful development. The participatory approach makes listening to each other and seeking together possible.

C. The need to internalize development processes

Participation in decision-making, in planning, i.e., being involved, is one of the major ways of enhancing internalization so that once people accept an orientation it becomes adopted as part of a life-style such as adopting the life-style of defecating in a latrine instead of a bush. It is only with internalization that people become protagonists of their own development. And Africa needs this badly. It has been said that even those decisions which have been good for Africa (such as promoting use of latrines to reduce contamination) have not become widely practised. Is this because the average African is so stupid that he cannot see what is good for him? Or is it because no trouble has been taken to engage his mind and feelings in the decisions that are being made - that need to be made with his participation? If, for no other reason, the participatory approach needs to be used to help people internalize and adopt new life-styles if need be. And there are areas in which Africa must adopt new life-styles if we are to survive. People need to be engaged in the dialogue that will make this internalization possible.

D. Enhancing mutual respect for different perspectives and peoples

The participatory approach is not possible unless those involved in it accord the other participants the dignity they deserve. Thus it enhances a mutually respectful search where all points of view are given attention. It helps to reduce high-handedness. And it is amazing how high-handed we become, those of us who have certain levels of education, those of us "who know". But I think the current African scene should help make every educated African a little bit humble and even embarrassed. Why is our continent in a survival crisis? Our high-handedness has not helped our people to survival. We have not been helping to enhance our people's confidence and yet we know that none can develop a dispossessed people; that only people themselves can develop themselves. We need to see that our high-handedness is part of the dispossessing processes that holds Africa down. And in our high-handedness (and sometimes sell out deals) we have helped to land the people of Africa in the crisis in which they are. We have bypassed the beneficial experiences from the centuries. We have thus opened wide the door that makes possible for a few crooks to define what is "African" based

mainly on selfish and limited interests and thus losing what has been genuine African experience. It should not be difficult for those who have been involved in the African development scene to be humble. We need to be humble and to reinstate dialogue with our people. We need to re-establish mutually respectful searches. We need to re-establish the process of searching together. We need the participatory process for a synthesis of genuine answers from the chaos. When we are convinced of a point, such as the need to plant trees especially when we cut some, we need to find ways of making tree planting part of our mental frame, our survival in ways that are mindful of people's need. Mutually respectful dialoguing, being listened to as well as listening re-establishes people's sense of self-esteem and helps to establish an atmosphere that facilitates adoption of new behaviour. It is in this process that we may enhance the flexibility of mind required to address the changing social scene that makes mandatory an approach of dynamic adjustment. A mutually respectful participatory approach is one path to substantive meaningful development in which segments of society are not left out even if they are seen as "slow" or "backwards" but rather are assisted to become part and parcel of the development scene, the actors as well as beneficiaries in the development process. Nor does this allow deliberate suppression of quick thinkers, "go-getters" in efforts to "keep them down". Rather this approach helps to get these positive experiences and approach to be more widely adopted by the group in order to move forward. And Africa needs to move forward!

IV. WOMEN IN THE RECOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT SCENARIO

A. Women: the other half

If we see the need for involving people in the discourse relating to recovery and development, we do see (one would hope!) that women must be part and parcel of this. After all, women are 50 per cent of the human race! But that kind of rational thinking quickly becomes irrelevant in the realities of life. For even when projects require "community participation", this usually means a talk, maybe a tea party, with the chief who may not even know what the get-together is all about! Anyway, the point is that even in this type of "community participation" the chiefs are practically all men. And hardly is there involvement of women in planning, designing and decision-making processes. Their "participation" is often limited to carrying stones and other labour for carrying out schemes already designed, good or bad. Yet women in our villages are at the heart of the recovery and development process, especially in Africa, and must be involved in decision-making.

B. Women and the home

It is virtually impossible to visualize meaningful development in which the home is bypassed or considered a non-issue. One of the factors in the current African crisis has been the tendency to bypass the home and the home-maker. In addition to common sense, study after study shows the centrality of the mother in the survival of her infants, in the education performance of the children, in the self-perception and self-image of the offspring. Her status of health and nutrition, her emotional well-being during pregnancy have been shown to influence the well-being and even the intellectual potential

of the children. It is often said as a by the way, "children are the leaders of tomorrow". Yes, indeed. They are literally the future; their health, their intellect, their decision-making mental set determines the future. And all these are in the hands of the mothers, especially in Africa where child-rearing is 100 per cent in the hands of women.

Why do I jump from "women" to "mothers"? This is because, in my experience in several parts of Africa, about 90 per cent of women aged 20 years and above are biological mothers. By age 30, over 99 per cent are mothers. Some are mothers within marriage and others are mothers outside marriage. Besides, even those who are not biological mothers are called upon to play the monitoring role. My experience is that a woman who is not a biological mother may actually end up being responsible for more children than those who are biological mothers. Responsible not in a "God fairy" or "father Christmas" sense but on a daily treadmill basis, responsible for the children's well-being, and their very survival. I therefore feel quite comfortable saying all women in Africa are mothers.

Women are already making important decisions about many things affecting children. First among them is food. What is eaten and when it is eaten and how much is eaten is almost exclusively in the hands of the women, the mothers.

C. Women and food security/agriculture

From the preceding statement, it can be seen that women have been involved in food security measures from time immemorial. There is a saying among my people to the effect that all a lazy woman needs is a child and the cries of the child will put a hoe in her hand. The cries of hungry children are the business of women. The world TV screens in 1984 were filled with pictures of skeletons of starving children dying in their mother's arms during the severe drought-induced famine in a number of African countries.

It is therefore not surprising that studies have shown that when women make decisions in agriculture, these decisions are related to having food in the family. Is it then surprising that women are central to the recovery and development process with respect to food security? If every homestead had food security, would not that nation be food secure? Why do we then choose the trickle-down approach instead of the logical start with enhancing the food security of each household and then in a bottom-up approach have national food security because the families have food security? At least it would not be possible to talk of a country that has food security when, in effect, the food is in the hands of a few commercial or agro-business people who keep the food locked up in stores!

D. Women and day-care arrangements for children

The best people to deal with issues of day-care arrangements are, in fact, women, especially women who have been involved in maternal roles. Nothing quite teaches a person how to respond to a child except the experience of doing so. It is quite common to hear that African women in the villages are "anti-education" because they keep children, especially girls, home and

away from school. What alternative does the woman have if someone has to look after a young one in order for the woman to forage for the survival of the family? If one has to decide between the possible survival of one's baby and going to school, would not one decide for survival? Is that not part of the maternal instinct that all women have? Instead of blaming the women, it would be more positive for society to help provide the means for women to be involved in community-based child-care arrangements.

Experience has shown that when women are involved in organizing community-based day-care facilities and are sure their babies will be looked after, then they release their daughters to school. And yet in the framework of national-level decision-making, even as basic an issue as the organization of day-care facilities is done without the active involvement of women from the planning stages. Can this not be left in the hands of women? Can women not be given the mandate and budgetary support to undertake this essential activity for the well-being of society and its future? And would community-based day-care arrangements not release time for the woman to pay further attention to food security issues for the family?

The care of children by an adult, caring person in a community-based day-care arrangement has been shown by a number of studies, including a recent one from Sri Lanka, to have far-reaching positive consequences on the child's future in terms of intellectual capacity, cognitive skills as well as physical survival. Why does society not facilitate arrangements for women to take on these kinds of leadership roles at the highest levels of government?

There are a host of issues in which women have long-standing experience. Only two have been mentioned here. Society needs to pull these out and to make use of that resource. This would be in the interest of the survival and development of African countries, not just in the interest of "women development".

V. OBSTACLES TO WOMEN'S MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION

A. External obstacles

At the start of this presentation, attention was drawn to the dismal economic situation of Africa which is reflected in its villages by high child and maternal death rates, under-nutrition, haggard appearances, apathy, etc., etc., etc. Let it be clear right from the start that extreme poverty is one of the major obstacles to the participatory processes. People are too busy foraging for basic survival to entertain "dialogue" that seems hypothetical and far-removed. And this maintains the vicious cycle.

Even though Africa must accept the challenge for its development, the twentieth century is a time of inter-dependence. What others do to Africa has a direct bearing on what happens in Africa. Just one example is the issue of international commodity pricing procedures. For example, Kenya and Ethiopia are both coffee-, tea- and cotton-growing countries. I have heard farmers urged to step up production. I have seen my own father in his old age working very hard to increase his tea acreage, looking forward to a doubling in his yield and income "since everything is costing so much

more". And I have seen his and the other farmers' desperation when they were informed that even though they brought in more, the money they would receive would be less because, they were told, "prices have been brought down". Prices of these "raw commodities" are fixed through international mechanisms and while prices of everything else on earth go up, the prices of raw materials keep going down! This is whether it be cotton, copper, tea, etc.! In addition to these pricing issues, there are the other international mechanisms that have resulted in a net outflow of resources out of Africa even in this period in which Africa is in crisis, a net outflow of huge amounts. Figures are obtainable from several sources who want them. These are not secrets.

Sometimes I get the picture of a python squeezing a young girl to death and at the same time ordering that girl to sing. She cannot sing. She is being squeezed to death. So how can she sing? Africa seems to be facing the same fate. International forces are squeezing Africa to death. Yet Africa is expected to sing and Africa cannot sing. Africa is urged to "pull itself together and pull itself up". But how can it? It is being squeezed. As Richard Jolly of UNICEF has said, "Africa must be allowed to breathe in order to be able to stand". The overall result of the current squeezing is a sense of trappedness and helplessness. It kills the hope of making things better. This is a major obstacle to women's participation and improvement of the women's lot as they are part of this whole that is being squeezed.

B. Let-the-woman-do-it syndrome

In spite of the reality of being squeezed, efforts, sometimes desperate efforts, continue to be made by the people to improve their lot. And women are in the forefront in African villages making efforts to face the challenges for survival. Instead of appreciating and enhancing this mutual struggle for survival, the "let-the-women-do-it" syndrome is often seen whenever a decision is made for women to be involved in decision-making. It is a "hands off" situation for everyone else! Official interest in the issues dies down. "Let women do it. They said they can solve the problem", is repeated over and the "hands off" signals don't come! It is in fact implemented with a lot of women's involvement. Society needs to be helped to see that involving women is not synonymous with saying "Women on the basis of biology will effect some magic for problems to dissolve!" It needs to be recognized that even for those decisions over which women have been given mandate there is need for budgetary allocations that are commensurate to the tasks that need to be performed. "Women's departments" or "women's bureaus" are among the most under-budgetted units in most governments. Quite often, there is nothing beyond the salary of the personnel. Heads of these "Bureaus" are often urged to "attract foreign money for women development", when government as a whole may be failing to raise foreign money! Is this reasonable? The practice of under-funding/under-budgeting for areas which are left to women's needs to be changed. Involving women should be seen as tapping a resource for national development, requiring holistic support, not "leaving it to women" and thus dumping the whole problem in the women's lap without support. This needs to be changed.

C. The daily burden of women must be seen as community tasks

In 1980, a UNICEF study entitled "The condition of women and children's well-being" stated:

> "She was working at 5
> moved to the city at 10
> and had children at 15".

This special study further stated:

> Overwork, lack of time and fatigue constitute formidable obstacles to any efforts on the part of women to change their conditions of existence ... Women's heavy burden of work and multiple roles are major deterrents to their effective participation... Conditions allow them to reproduce existing patterns with little means to modify the economic and social structures". (page 22)

This is no surprise since women are indeed overworked. This study states:

> "ECA has estimated that in Africa, 70 per cent of the food production, 50 per cent of the animal husbandry and 100 per cent of the food processing and household and child-rearing chores are carried out by women and girls".

It seems accepted in practically all African societies that getting water is a woman's task. So is getting firewood. So is cooking, weeding, etc., etc., etc.

Women are too exhausted even to be free to pay sufficient attention to the basic survival needs of children like proper feeding of young children, getting children to immunization clinics, etc. Women are kept in bondage by myths of what constitute women's duty and what constitute men's duties.

Why can firewood fetching not be seen as a community task? Groups of men could carry wood in the same way they organize to carry the sick adults to hospitals. They could even organize donkeys and oxen to do this. We now see in parts of Kenya that getting water has been taken up as a task of young boys. They come from school and harness the donkey and get water. Society needs to see the absolute necessity to distribute the loads that are now seen as 'women tasks or else'. In a rural study I undertook some time back, fifth and sixth grade students could not complete writing up "what mother did yesterday" within the allocated one hour. There was so much to write. But they finished "what father did yesterday" in less than 10 minutes'. Many wrote, "He sat under the tree from about 10 a.m. and mother took him some food and drinks" and... and... I can't think of anything else!"

Rural African men's roles and unemployed men in urban and periurban centres have been "taken over by development". The butchery has replaced hunting in many societies. The police or the "militia" have taken over responsibility for village security. These reducing roles of males have increased the sense of rural men being underemployed and unemployed. All their time is leisure time, most of it spent on alcoholic intake. For rural men who have not taken on new roles have become redundant and irrelevant to the basic issues of family survival. They are losing grounds for paternal authority and expressing their "maleness" through increased violence. Violence has

gone up within families and communities. The opportunity cost of development is falling heavily on the women as "her" helpers are taken up by school, etc. Some of the tasks known as women's issues need to be discussed. And these are the kinds of issues that can be taken up in a participatory development process involving discussion. Studies have shown that individually men have no problem accepting responsibility to get wood or water. But no man would be seen doing it alone because others would laugh at him. Once it becomes a community-accepted position, the myth is destroyed. Then men and women should work together for their joint survival and survival of the group, particularly survival of their children through sharing the tasks that need to be done and providing support to each other. Consequences of overburdened women and idle men in our rural areas where over 60 per cent of Africans live are not consequences on women alone. They are consequences on the family, on the village, on the nation. National leaders had better take note and support dialoguing and decisions on task-sharing.

No matter how we look at it, African women will not be able to help society survive better nor help themselves and their children survive better until the load pressing on them is released. If development was moving faster and piped water was in our homes, that would take away some problems. But development is not moving fast enough. And we will not have piped water in all African villages by the year 2000. In the meantime, burden sharing must become a top-level national issue to be discussed in communities in the interest of recovery and development. Top leadership in African countries must face and address this issue.

Poor health of women and their children as obstacles to participation

UNICEF Executive Director James P. Grant stated at the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women held in Nairobi in 1985:

> "It is now widely recognized that the typical mother in a poor community in a low-income country faces the prospect of each of her young children being ill 160 days a year, often so seriously that she, on average, can expect one of her children to die and another to become permanently impaired and a long-term burden on the family. Since this is an average, many families suffer a far more serious burden."

Mr. Grant further stated:

> "In each serious case of child illness, she (the mother) is likely to spend some (often a surprisingly large share) of her scarce financial resources for medicines and medical care... And who can calculate the emotional impact on the mother (and the surrounding family) of each child loss or impairment, reinforcing her feelings of helplessness and lack of confidence in her own capacity to control life?"

Similarly it is estimated that of the 500,000 maternal deaths that occur globally every year, 150,000 (30 per cent) is in Africa, a reflection of the poor health status, poor obstetric care and the overall poor environment that is not supportive to survival. Africa constitutes about 10 per cent

of the world's population and 20 per cent of the world's births but provides over 30 per cent of child's death and over 30 per cent of women's deaths. How long will Africa continue to shoulder this unfair proportion of the burden on death?

Those responsible for economic planning including planning for recovery often see health as "a by the way" issue. It is a "soft sector", so the saying goes. It is a "consumer" sector. It is low priority. Yet, as the previous Director General of WHO, Dr. Mahler, used to say:

"Health is not everything, but without health, we have nothing."

It is worth noting that when those who classify health care development as low priority get ill themselves or when members of their families need health care, they are the first to seek the most expensive health care outside the country. Why not plan reasonable minimum health care for everyone as a national priority?

Planning for availability and access to health care must be seen as one of the priority areas in African recovery and development. Planning for health does not mean planning to build hospitals - (I have deleted this at least three times in earlier versions but it is retained. Why?) or even health centres. There is now available a large body of experiences in Africa in the area of community-based health care. In recent years, top-level African conferences, including OAU Heads of State and Government summits, have endorsed, by resolution, the Bamako Initiative in which community-based health care is one of the central themes. African leaders need to look at these approaches seriously. No matter what approach is the preference of national governments, whether expansion of hospitals if it can be afforded or community-based health-care approaches, there is no getting around the issue that health care for mothers and children constitute a priority in economic recovery and development. It is one of the central issues for increasing productivity and enhancing food security.

E. The firewood-land degradation cycle

Firewood-land degradation's vicious cycle is one of those difficult issues. Of course women must cook food. Their children need to eat. Their husbands will beat them if they do not present well-cooked meals. And so, no matter what the conservation law says, women will have to break everything in their sight for cooking. Some women are even planting trees and breaking them before they mature because of the firewood demand. Women in Asia, the Middle East and Africa are further depleting the soil by using animal dung for cooking. The figures on how much reduction in food production results from this are impressive. So again, it is easy to point an accusing finger at the women. But remember, women must cook. And women will cook if it kills them. Having looked at the issues of desertification at some depth in recent times, I have become increasingly convinced that one way out would be widespread rural electrification, to have electricity and simple cookers (one or two hot plates) for every family. A body of knowledge now exists that points to the potential of simple solar cookers. African leaders must make decisions that will interrupt this firewood-land degradation cycle by

providing alternatives for firewood fuel. It would also give the land some rest from being denuded. Rural electrification needs to be accorded the same importance as water. Cutting wood for fuel and denuding the land further worsens water availability. I have been forced by circumstances of land degradation and its consequences on water, food availability and health to conclude that if I had to choose between water access and rural electrification, rural electrification would have an edge. But the best would be if they go hand-in-hand. For the choice between dying from cholera or pneumonia is no choice!

Oh yes, there are costs. And no, I have not got the estimates of what it would take to effect widespread rural electrification in Africa. But unless we are going to be content with tinkering on issues of the burden on the African rural women and the current serious trend in land degradation, we have to make some very tough and very costly decisions now. Most rural villages cannot afford to establish rural electrification. But most rural villages in these times need help in most areas. People have talked of a Marshall Plan for Africa. Africa certainly needs help for rural electrification or developing solar energy for cooking and water availability. A hot plate or two for each family unit would hit two birds with one stone: reducing the wood-fetching burden and easing off the land degradation. This is an issue that needs to be addressed by all those interested in African food security issues who must work in rehabilitating the land and those who want to reduce the burden of women carrying wood. In the meantime, the fetching of firewood must be examined and the myths that make this a women's task dismantled.

Going back to the Marshall Plan idea, would helping Africa to develop non-wood cooking options and access to water cost greater proportions of today's wealth in developed countries than did the original Marshall Plan?

F. Knowledge and experience: A basis for job assignment

I have spent most of my life teaching at the University of Nairobi and have had a chance to visit many universities in African countries. Over the past 20 years it has been rewarding to see the increase in enrolment of women even though the percentages could be better.

As a teacher at university who talks to other teachers at university, we are aware that, on the whole, women students perform very well. It is to be expected, really, since they have had to go through tougher natural selection and they must "have what it takes" to get to university at all. Many graduate with honours and distinctions. But let the job-giving come! As a teacher I have cried with my ex-students not because they are women but because they feel trapped and I know what it feels like to be trapped. We have cried together for they have become my friends, in a way, my children. These have been brilliant daughters of Africa whose fathers and mothers have stretched themselves to educate. And they end up assigned to "non-jobs" while the cream jobs quite often go to male juniors who may not be necessarily qualified. Why this waste? Why are we parents stretching ourselves to educate our daughters and sons if half our efforts (daughters) are to be discounted?

There is hardly a highly qualified, experienced and good person who happens to be a women who has not had the 'privilege' of working under

questionable supervisors. Till when"? Look at the political cabinets or councils of ministers in Africa. How many women are in full ministerial status? What percentage? Why this dismal state of affairs when all African countries have well-qualified women?

For myself and a number of my professional women colleagues, we decided to enjoy our life's work and do our bit in whatever station "the bosses" place us. But looking at it from the perspective of those who are making decisions and which women are subordinate to them, one wonders if Africa would not be in better shape if choices were made more on the bases of proven knowledge, record of performance and experience. The fact that women are not prominent in food security and in the recovery process is simply part of this whole picture of disregarding and therefore failing to make use of women in the general development and recovery thrust.

When I have raised this matter with some of the "approachable people in high places" (men of course!) regarding a down-trodden sister who is a waste because she is not allowed to contribute as she could, they respond with helpless kindness and explain most meekly "These decisions are political and there is nothing one can do about it". Since when were political decisions "something nothing can be done about"? Look at the coup d'Etats in Africa! Do they not show that someone, if not those in the seat, always tries to do something about the political situation? Why does it need to come to confrontation? Why? Why can we not, out of shame for the mess the continent is in, try to be even 50 per cent reasonable in matching jobs to experience, skills and qualification? Can the atmosphere begin to change so that those among our daughters who are able will have a chance to contribute more because they will be given a chance? For these are our daughters we the parents - fathers and mothers. How come we forget that when dealing with someone else's daughter?

G. Women as obstacles to women development

One of my favourite books, the Bible, states, and I paraphrase 'why do you look at the piece of sand in your brother's (sister's) eye and not see the chunk in your own?" Women must look at themselves and face the fact that they are continuing to enhance their own oppression. A man from the Caribbean once asked a group of African women, "Isn't it women who rear <u>boys</u> and <u>girls</u> and train them what to do? Why don't you bring them up to value both men and women? Why don't you African women in a village train your boys as a group task to help with getting wood and water? Why don't you as a group train them to cook and to help around the house as mothers in the West do?" Why indeed?

One reason women cannot do this is that the fathers may not allow their sons to be "so degraded". But the more important factor is that women would not dream of it. Should they not start to dream of it? Which African man spends enough time in the home to be aware of the details of what a mother teaches her children?

There are definitive oppressive practices women inflict on each other. We have heard of brides being burnt to death in certain parts of the world

because they did not bring the desired dowry. Who does the burning of the bride? The mother-in-law! Who asks the son to chase his wife away because she is barren or has no sons? Who causes most tears to the young wives of the world? The father-in-law? No, indeed. You know it. It is the mothers-in-law of the world that keep young wives in tears. It is the mothers-in-law who fuel anger in their sons to beat up the wives! While many women want their daughters to be treated with kindness they are very keen that "No woman should answer my son back". And "she should be kept in her place". A woman quickly forgets that our daughter will be someone else's daughter-in-law and "get it" too! Shall we pledge and work at becoming a new breed of mothers-in-law who will support our daughters-in-law and enhance family harmony in the homes of our children?

Elite women may say "That is not me! I haven't burnt any bride to death!". But these things come in many forms. I have been in a few interviews where there were male candidates and women candidates whom we were interviewing. It is usually the women in the interviewing group who tend to concentrate on the weaknesses of the woman candidates, especially if they are "pretty young things"! "She is just a man hunter, etc. ..." Even on technical skills women interviewers tend to demand of women candidates greater perfection, requiring them to be almost perfect before they are supported by interviewing women. This attitude extends to elections of whatever kind. Is it not a fact that women are among the most persistent voters in elections and yet very few women who run for elective posts ever get elected? Can women be inherently less able than men? Let me hasten to add that this may not be an individual woman's fault! Women have been brought up to have a low image of themselves as women which they then project to other women. The world is full of wives who resent women who are at par in jobs with their husbands. "She thinks she's like my husband. But she is just a woman after all" one hears, as if being a woman is a crime! And this said by women! And then we turn around and blame only men for oppressing women!

Women need to be consciously aware that those who have lived under cultural or any other oppression tend to 'get at each other' in their struggle to "make it". One develops a vulnerable outlook and is in danger of seeing the success of others as competition to oneself or just anti-oneself. Women need to actively work on enhancing the perception of the value of themselves and of each other. And let women accept, indeed, work to support deserving women to get to positions of responsibility at local, national and international levels. This broad-based approach might be the best approach to women having a say in food security.

And if a younger woman should begin rising to greater heights than the older women who have been in the struggle for long, let the older women in positions of influence look at it that the young rising women are standing on the shoulders of giants - those who have been in the struggle. Their shoulders and feel credit for it! It is a tribute to success. And let the older women in high places have the graciousness of John the Baptist who accepted that Jesus who came on the scene much later must increase while he decreases. It's part of life! No reason for grief or bitterness! Nurturing should be a joyful experience. For it is all John has been immortalized through Jesus. Who knows what is good for us?

B. Confusing women's development/well-being with anti-male sentiments

There seems to be a rather common and sad confusion that if one is "pushing for" something then one must be pushing against something. But "it ain't necessarily so!" In particular I wish to emphasize that helping the development of a woman should be a means to helping the development of her family, not breaking it up. That is why I lay emphasis on dialogue and participatory discussion of problems in order for families to see that it is in their interest for the woman's load to be lightened. Among the poor struggling families, observation has shown that driving a wedge to divide the family unit even in the hope of "women's development" does not, in fact, end up helping the woman. An emphasis needs to be made that bettering a woman's life is in the context of bettering the life of her family, community, nation and humankind. There would hardly be any sense to remove one form of oppression and replace it with another - from women! These are rare cases of brutality where saving a woman's life means removing her from that social setting. But this would apply to any other individual - girl or boy whose life was abused and threatened with brutality, strength of the family unit should be the overriding aim of helping a woman's lot in this world.

VI. CONCLUSION

On the whole, the African woman is working very hard for her survival and the survival of her family. Her life is full of activity from dawn to sunset. Unfortunately these activities often resemble those of a caged mouse which, no matter how active it becomes, is still within the confines of the cage.

Her situation is made even more complex in that the cage in which she is lies within a larger entrapped barrel, i.e., the entire African continent, especially that part south of the Sahara. Those in the barrel are also busy trying to get out of the confines of the barrel and do not always have time or the generosity of spirit to be concerned about her caged status. The lives of those in the cage and the larger barrel is made even more complex by the fact that a Python is squeezing the barrel and leaving the occupants of both the barrel and the cage breathless, for that is the overall impact of the international economic mechanisms on Africa. It seems that just enough air is brought it to facilitate breathing to keep the majority alive but not to do much more in terms of "improving one's lot". As only a little air is allowed into the barrel, even less gets to the cage.

This leads to the sad conclusion that there are no easy answers to the woman in the cage and even to the entire inhabitants in the barrel. Tinkering with her cage or with the barrel with noises of "you must participate" do not help her very much. Instead some definitive steps need to be taken to ease the situation for the occupants of the barrel as well as those in the cage.

These include enhancement of the participatory process as discussed even within the barrel limits! Even within the limits of the cage and barrel, the participatory approach seems to offer the greatest possibility of a cohesive and productive concerted effort of dealing with this state of entrappedness. Since barrels and cages are not always made of concrete, maybe this

cohesive and concerted effort would edge in a little more fresh air, pull the prison bars a little bit apart. It is up to the occupants of the cage and the barrel to establish the participatory process in their long-term interest as a means of making maximum use of their evolved experience, intelligence and resources.

Even within the limits of the cage and the barrel, sharing of tasks can make life more bearable. The myths surrounding gender-fixed task classification must be dismantled so that men and women, boys and girls may share responsibility to enhance the survival and well-being of the group. The exhausted, chronically ill and overburdened life of the African mother does not augur well for the future generations of Africa. The apparent redundancy of the male does nothing for his self-image nor the perception of his offsprings of him. In the interest of both women and men, task sharing must be reviewed and though a participating process decision on task sharing be made. This would, at least, be a facet of the new paradigm for development that Kari-Eric Knuttson of UNICEF and others have been stating as essential for holistic development to benefit all - development that sees beyond simple economics done.

But it must also be said that those who are at the bottom of a pit cannot always help themselves. They need someone to give them a hoe to dig holes on the sides of the walls of the pit so as to climb out. Or someone to throw in a rope by which to climb out. With specific reference to food security in African recovery and development, what Africa needs most in terms of assistance from external sources seems to me to be two items which could be classified as dreams.

The first is a source of fuel other than tree cutting. This would help put a halt to deforestation related to fuel needed for cooking food. Animal dung, straw and leaves would be left on the land to help rehabilitate the land instead of being used for cooking. It would also give the seedlings planted in reforestation efforts a chance to grow to maturity. It would help halt land degradation in Africa and eventually lead to a situation that would provide sufficient food per land unit to support a reasonable population size. Those seriously concerned with African food security and with lessening the woman's burden need to apply themselves on how to help develop alternative fuel for Africa. There are possibilities for solar cookers. Rural electrification in the few places where it exists, with one or two hot plates, reduces both the burden and deforestation. This may seem as a dream. But as poet L. Hughes says:

> "Life without dreams
> is like a bird
> with broken wings
> that cannot fly".

The dream here is that a way can be worked out for solar cookers/rural electrification to make cooking possible in every African home without wood and thus significantly reduce continuing deforestation and the burden of carrying wood over long distances.

The second dream is that water access would be increased to every African home so that it wouldn't take more than an hour to get to water for basic needs, especially cooking and for hygiene. And maybe even for sprinkling a backyard garden in support of food security. As the United Nations Decade for Water and Sanitation comes to an end while Africa is where it is, the mirage of this possibility being just a dream becomes even more entrenched. But one hopes the mirage will vanish as we get closer to solutions of getting water closer to the people.

It really is very difficult to see the point of keeping on talking of lessening the burden of the African women and/or enhancing her role in household food security without addressing these two crucial and linked factors. Of course they are costly. That is why they are dreams - for Africa. But the world knows the cost of the Marshall Plan was no peanuts. There was concern, with interest and commitment and those who were well placed at that time helped out those who were in difficulties of basic survival. Who knows? Who knows? Life has its surprises. Maybe those who are well placed now will respond in a similar way! Surely basic humanity has not changed that much!

In the meantime let the African leaders, who at the moment are mostly men, remember that we are together in the barrel. The pythons are outside. Let men help the women breathe a little and let the women help themselves and each other breathe a little! Let those in leadership positions bring in all the others as it is their birthright. Let Africa revive the participatory process. Even if we should die, it will be nicer dying holding hands than pinching one another and stepping on each other's toes! And in the meantime - who knows. Some generous souls, or our efforts, might burst the barrel - and the cage.

In the days of the Roman Empire, do you remember who were classified as barbarians? At the end of the second World War, do you remember who were the crushed nations? Look at them now! Life does change!

ANNEX 1

Under Five Mortality Rate, Percentage Annual Growth Rate and GNP Per Capita Growth Rate for Africa 1960-1987

	Under Five Mortality Rate			Percentage Annual Reduction Rate		GNP per capita Growth rate	
	1960	1980	1987	1960-80	1980-87	1965-80	1980-86
Algeria	270	147	131	3.0 %	3,9 %	4.2	1.4
Angola	346	272	288	1.2 %	-0.8 %		
Benin	310	211	188	1.9 %	1.6 %	-0,3	0,0
Botswana	174	110	95	2.3 %	2,1 %	9,9	7,4
Burkina Faso	362	265	237	1.5 %	1.6 %	1.7	-0,8
Burundi	258	215	192	0.9 %	1.6 %	2,4	-0.5
Cameroon	275	176	156	2.2 %	1,7 %	2.4	3,5
Central African Republic	308	244	226	1,2 %	1,1 %	0.3	-0,8
Chad	326	253	227	1.3 %	1,5 %	-1,9	2,9
Comoros	261	150	135	2,7 %	1,5 %	-0,3	0,6
Congo	241	132	117	3,0 %	1,7 %	2,7	2.2
Côte d'Ivoire	264	166	145	2,3 %	1,9 %	2.8	-3,1
Djibouti							
Egypt	300	164	129	3,0 %	3,4 %	2,8	2,6
Equatorial Guinea	315	242	223	1.3 %	1,2 %		
Ethiopia	294	260	261	0,6 %	-0,1 %	0.4	-2,1
Gabon	288	194	172	2.0 %	1.7 %	5,6	-1,7
Gambia	361	312	292	0,7 %	0,9 %	1,1	2,8
Ghana	224	165	149	1.5 %	1.4 %	-0,8	-2,8
Guinea	346	281	252	1.0 %	1.5 %	1,3	-0,7
Guinea-Bissau	315	253	227	1.1 %	1.5 %	-2,7	2,4
Kenya	208	133	116	2.2 %	1,9 %	3,1	-1.4
Lesotho	208	161	139	1.3 %	2,1 %	6,8	0,5
Liberia	255	173	150	2.0 %	2,0 %	0,5	-5,5
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	268	150	123	2,9 %	2,8 %		
Madagascar	364	216	187	2,6 %	2,0 %	-0,4	-4,1
Malawi	364	300	267	1,0 %	1,7 %	3,2	-0,7
Mali	370	323	296	0,7 %	1,2 %	2,1	-0.5
Mauritania	320	249	223	1.2 %	1,6 %	-0.1	1,9
Mauritius	104	42	30	4,4 %	4,7 %	3,7	3,6
Morocco	265	152	123	2,7 %	3,0 %	2,7	0,4
Mozambique	330	258	295	1,2 %	-1,9 %		-7,6
Niger	320	258	232	1,1 %	1,5 %	-2,5	-5,7
Nigeria	318	198	177	2,3 %	1,6 %	4.2	-5,3
Rwanda	248	231	209	0,4 %	1,4 %	1.6	-1.6

	Under Five Mortality Rate			Percentage Annual Reduction Rate		GNP per capita Growth rate	
	1960	1980	1987	1960-80	1980-87	1965-80	1980-86
Sao Tome-et-Principe			91				
Senegal	313	251	220	1.1 %	1.9 %	-0.5	0.0
Seychelles			21				
Sierra Leone	386	300	270	1.3 %	1.5 %	0.7	1.8
Somalia	294	247	225	0.9 %	1.3 %	0.1	9.8
Soudan	293	210	184	1.7 %	1.9 %	0.8	-4.2
Swaziland	227	209	182	0.6 %	1.8 %	2.7	1.1
United Republic of Tanzania	248	201	179	1.0 %	1.6 %	0.8	2.6
Togo	305	176	156	2.7 %	1.7 %	1.7	-4.5
Tunisia	255	113	86	4.0 %	3.8 %	4.7	0.9
Uganda	224	187	172	0.9 %	1.2 %	-2.2	1.8
Zaire	251	186	164	1.5 %	1.8 %	-1.3	-3.2
Zambia	228	146	130	2.2 %	1.6 %	-1.2	-5.3
Zimbabwe	182	132	116	1.6 %	1.8 %	1.7	-0.1

Table E U5MR reduction rates, GNP per capita growth rates, and fertility reduction rates, 1960-87

Country	Under 5 mortality rate						GNP per capita		Total fertility rate		
				Average annual rate of reduction			Average annual growth rate				Average annual reduction rate
	1960	1980	1987	1960-80	1980-87	Required 1987-2000 **	1965-80	1980-86	1960	1987	1960-87
Afghanistan	380	321	304	0.84%	0.77%	10.68%	0.6		7.0	6.9	0.05%
Mali	370	323	296	0.68%	1.24%	10.50%	2.1	-0.5	6.5	6.7	-0.11%
Mozambique	330	258	295	1.22%	-1.93%	10.48%		-7.6	6.4	6.3	0.06%
Angola	346	272	288	1.20%	0.82%	10.31%			6.4	6.4	0.00%
Sierra Leone	386	300	270	1.25%	1.40%	9.86%	0.7	-1.8	6.3	6.5	-0.12%
Malawi	364	300	267	0.96%	1.65%	9.79%	3.2	-0.7	6.9	7.0	-0.05%
Ethiopia	294	260	261	0.61%	-0.05%	9.63%	0.4	-2.1	6.7	6.2	0.29%
Guinea	346	280	252	1.04%	1.54%	9.38%	1.3	-0.7	6.4	6.1	0.18%
Burkina Faso	362	265	237	1.55%	1.58%	9.05%	1.7	-0.8	6.7	6.5	0.11%
Niger	320	258	232	1.07%	1.51%	8.81%	2.5	-5.7	7.1	7.1	0.00%
Chad	326	253	227	1.26%	1.54%	8.65%	-1.9	2.9	6.0	5.8	0.13%
Guinea-Bissau	315	253	227	1.09%	1.54%	8.65%	-2.7	2.4	5.1	5.4	-0.21%
Central African Rep	308	244	226	1.16%	1.09%	8.62%	0.8	-0.8	5.7	5.8	0.06%
Somalia	294	247	225	0.87%	1.32%	8.59%	-0.1	0.8	6.6	6.6	0.00%
Mauritania	320	249	223	1.25%	1.56%	8.53%	-0.1	-1.9	6.5	6.5	0.00%
Senegal	313	251	220	1.10%	1.87%	8.43%	-0.5	0.0	6.7	6.3	0.23%
Rwanda	248	231	209	0.35%	1.42%	8.07%	1.6	-1.6	7.7	8.2	-0.23%
Kampuchea	218	330	208	-2.09%	6.38%	8.04%			6.3	4.6	1.16%
Yemen, Dem	378	236	202	2.33%	2.20%	7.83%		-5.5	7.0	6.6	0.22%
Bhutan	297	222	200	1.44%	1.48%	7.76%			5.9	5.5	0.26%
Nepal	297	222	200	1.44%	1.48%	7.76%	0.0	0.8	5.9	5.8	0.06%
Yemen	378	227	195	2.52%	2.15%	7.58%	6.5	5.1	7.0	6.9	0.05%
Burundi	258	215	192	0.91%	1.60%	7.47%	2.4	-0.5	5.7	6.2	-0.31%
Bangladesh	262	211	191	1.08%	1.41%	7.43%	-0.3	0.9	6.7	5.4	0.80%
Benin	310	211	188	1.91%	1.64%	7.32%	-0.3	0.0	6.8	7.0	-0.11%
Madagascar	364	216	187	2.58%	2.04%	7.28%	-0.4	-4.1	6.6	6.6	0.00%
Sudan	293	210	184	1.65%	1.87%	7.16%	0.8	-4.2	6.7	6.4	0.17%
Tanzania, U. Rep	248	201	179	1.05%	1.64%	6.97%	0.8	-2.6	6.9	7.1	-0.11%
Nigeria	318	198	177	2.34%	1.59%	6.89%	4.2	-5.3	6.9	6.9	0.00%
Bolivia	282	207	176	1.53%	2.29%	6.85%	1.7	-5.9	6.6	6.0	0.35%
Haiti	294	197	174	1.98%	1.76%	6.76%	0.9	-2.3	6.2	4.6	1.10%
Gabon	288	194	172	1.96%	1.70%	6.68%	5.6	-1.7	4.1	5.1	-0.81%
Uganda	224	187	172	0.90%	1.19%	6.68%	-2.2	-1.8	6.9	6.9	0.00%
Pakistan	277	192	169	1.82%	1.81%	6.56%	1.8	3.4	7.0	6.3	0.39%
Zaire	251	186	164	1.49%	1.78%	6.34%	-1.3	-3.2	5.9	6.1	-0.12%
Lao PDR	232	189	163	1.02%	2.09%	6.30%			6.2	5.6	0.38%
Togo	305	176	156	2.71%	1.71%	5.98%	1.7	-4.5	6.2	6.0	0.12%
Cameroon	275	176	156	2.21%	1.71%	5.98%	2.4	3.5	5.8	5.8	0.00%
India	282	180	152	2.22%	2.39%	5.79%	1.5	2.9	5.8	4.2	1.19%
Liberia	258	173	150	1.98%	2.02%	5.69%	0.5	-5.5	6.3	6.5	-0.12%
Ghana	224	165	149	1.52%	1.45%	5.65%	-0.8	-2.8	6.9	6.3	0.34%
Oman	378	196	149	3.23%	3.84%	5.65%	9.0	9.8	7.2	7.1	0.05%
Cote d'Ivoire	264	166	145	2.29%	1.91%	5.45%	2.8	-3.1	7.3	7.4	-0.05%
Lesotho	208	161	139	1.27%	2.08%	5.14%	6.8	0.5	5.8	5.7	0.06%
Zambia	228	146	130	2.20%	1.64%	4.65%	-1.2	-5.3	6.6	7.1	-0.27%
Egypt	300	164	129	2.97%	3.37%	4.59%	2.8	2.6	7.1	4.6	1.59%
Peru	233	144	126	2.38%	1.89%	4.42%	0.8	-2.6	6.9	4.3	1.74%
Libya	268	150	123	2.86%	2.80%	4.24%			7.2	6.8	0.21%
Morocco	265	152	123	2.74%	2.98%	4.24%	2.7	0.4	7.2	4.6	1.65%
Indonesia	135	145	120	2.39%	2.67%	4.06%	5.2	2.0	5.4	3.1	2.03%
Congo	241	132	117	2.97%	1.71%	4.31%	2.7	2.2	5.9	5.9	0.00%
Kenya	208	133	116	2.21%	1.93%	4.13%	3.1	-1.4	8.1	7.9	0.09%
Zimbabwe	182	132	116	1.59%	1.83%	4.25%	1.7	0.1	7.5	5.6	1.08%
Algeria	270	147	111	2.99%	3.93%	3.48%	4.2	1.4	7.4	5.7	0.96%
Honduras	232	140	111	2.49%	3.26%	3.48%	1.1	-2.3	7.4	5.3	1.23%
Guatemala	230	130	103	2.81%	3.27%	3.48%	3.0	-4.1	6.8	5.6	0.72%
Saudi Arabia	292	131	102	3.93%	3.51%	3.41%			7.3	7.1	0.10%
Nicaragua	210	132	99	2.29%	4.03%	3.07%	-0.7	-4.3	7.3	5.3	1.18%
Burma	229	118	98	3.26%	2.62%	3.83%	1.6	2.7	5.9	3.9	1.52%
South Africa	192	120	98	2.32%	2.85%	3.70%	3.2	2.8	6.5	4.4	1.53%
Turkey	258	133	97	3.26%	4.41%	2.92%	3.6	2.4	6.1	3.4	2.14%
Iraq	222	110	96	3.45%	1.93%	4.19%			7.2	6.2	0.55%
Botswana	174	110	95	2.27%	2.07%	4.12%	9.9	7.4	6.9	6.1	0.46%
Iran, Islamic Rep.	254	130	94	3.29%	4.53%	2.80%	2.9	3.6	7.3	5.6	0.98%
Viet Nam	233	116	91	3.43%	3.41%	3.41%			6.0	3.9	1.58%

** *The average annual reduction rate required, to achieve the U.N. target of reducing U5MR to 70 or less by the year 2000, or halving the 1980 rate, whichever is less.*

Country	Under 5 mortality rate						GNP per capita		Total fertility rate		
				Average annual rate of reduction			Average annual growth rate				
	1960	1980	1987	1960-80	1980-87	**required 1987-2000	1965-80	1980-86	1960	1987	Average annual reduction rate 1960-87
Ecuador	183	107	89	2.65%	2.60%	3.91%	5.4	1.6	6.9	4.5	1.57%
Brazil	160	103	87	2.18%	2.38%	4.03%	6.3	0.3	6.2	3.3	2.31%
El Salvador	206	110	87	3.09%	3.30%	3.47%	1.5	2.3	6.8	4.7	1.36%
Tunisia	255	113	86	3.99%	3.83%	3.11%	4.7	0.9	7.2	3.8	2.34%
Papua New Guinea	247	111	85	3.92%	3.74%	3.16%			6.3	5.5	0.50%
Dominican Rep.	200	102	84	3.31%	2.74%	3.77%	3.8	1.8	7.3	3.6	2.58%
Philippines	135	86	75	2.23%	1.94%	4.19%	3.2	4.0	6.6	4.2	1.66%
Mexico	140	83	70	2.58%	2.40%	3.85%	3.6	2.0	6.7	3.4	2.53%
Colombia	148	78	69	3.15%	1.74%	4.23%	3.7	0.1	6.7	3.5	2.38%
Syrian Arab Rep.	218	87	67	4.49%	3.66%	3.18%	5.1	0.9	7.5	6.6	0.47%
Paraguay	134	70	63	3.19%	1.49%	4.42%	4.1	2.4	6.8	4.5	1.52%
Mongolia	158	77	61	3.53%	3.27%	3.38%			5.7	5.3	0.27%
Jordan	218	80	60	4.89%	4.03%	3.07%	5.8	0.2	8.0	7.1	0.44%
Lebanon	92	62	53	1.95%	2.22%	4.04%			6.4	3.3	2.42%
Thailand	149	67	51	3.92%	3.82%	3.29%	4.4	2.8	6.4	2.4	3.57%
Albania	151	60	48	4.51%	3.14%	3.55%			5.8	2.9	2.53%
China	202	56	45	6.21%	3.08%	3.58%	4.1	9.2	5.9	2.3	3.43%
Sri Lanka	113	58	45	3.28%	3.56%	3.32%	2.8	2.5	5.2	2.6	2.53%
Venezuela	114	50	45	4.04%	1.49%	4.42%	2.3	4.1	6.5	3.6	2.16%
Guyana	94	54	39	2.73%	4.54%	2.79%	0.7	6.9	6.0	2.6	3.05%
Argentina	75	46	38	2.41%	2.69%	3.79%	1.7	2.6	3.1	2.9	0.25%
Panama	105	43	35	4.37%	2.90%	3.51%	2.8	0.2	5.9	3.0	2.47%
Korea, Dem. Rep. of	120	43	34	5.00%	3.30%	3.29%		5.6	3.5		1.73%
Korea, Rep. of	120	43	34	5.00%	3.30%	3.29%	7.3	6.8	5.4	1.9	3.79%
Malaysia	106	42	33	4.52%	3.39%	3.42%	4.7	1.1	6.7	3.3	2.59%
United Arab Emirates	239	43	33	8.22%	3.71%	3.07%			6.9	4.6	1.49%
Uruguay	56	43	32	1.31%	4.13%	3.19%	2.5	-3.7	2.9	2.5	0.40%
USSR	53	34	30	2.20%	1.77%	4.28%			2.5	2.3	0.31%
Mauritius	104	42	30	4.43%	4.69%	2.71%	3.7	3.6	5.7	1.9	3.99%
Romania	82	36	28	4.03%	3.53%	3.34%		3.0	2.0	2.1	-0.18%
Yugoslavia	113	37	28	5.43%	3.90%	2.94%	5.2	0.0	2.7	1.9	1.29%
Chile	142	43	26	5.80%	6.93%	1.28%	0.0	-2.7	5.3	2.7	2.47%
Trinidad and Tobago	67	29	24	4.10%	2.67%	3.55%	3.1	-6.6	5.0	2.6	2.39%
Kuwait	128	34	23	6.41%	5.43%	2.30%			7.4	4.6	1.75%
Jamaica	88	29	23	5.40%	3.26%	3.23%	-0.1	-3.3	5.4	2.7	2.53%
Costa Rica	121	31	23	6.58%	4.17%	2.75%	3.3	-1.0	6.9	3.2	2.81%
Bulgaria	69	25	20	4.95%	3.14%	3.26%			2.2	1.9	0.54%
Poland	70	24	19	5.21%	3.28%	3.47%		1.3	2.6	2.2	0.62%
Cuba	87	27	19	5.68%	4.90%	2.32%			4.7	1.7	3.70%
Hungary	57	26	19	3.85%	4.38%	2.88%	5.1	1.5	1.8	1.7	0.00%
Portugal	112	30	19	6.37%	6.32%	1.80%	4.6	1.2	3.1	1.7	2.20%
Greece	64	23	17	4.99%	4.23%	2.64%	4.8	-0.1	2.2	1.7	0.95%
Czechoslovakia	32	20	17	2.32%	2.29%	4.00%			2.4	2.0	0.67%
Belgium	35	15	13	4.15%	2.02%	3.67%	3.6	0.9	2.7	1.6	1.92%
USA	30	15	13	3.41%	2.02%	3.67%	1.8	1.9	3.3	1.8	2.22%
New Zealand	27	16	13	2.58%	2.92%	3.67%	1.7	1.1	3.8	1.9	2.53%
Israel	40	18	13	3.91%	4.54%	2.79%	3.7	-0.1	3.9	2.8	1.22%
Austria	43	16	12	4.82%	4.03%	3.07%	4.0	1.8	2.8	1.5	2.29%
Singapore	50	15	12	5.84%	3.14%	3.07%	8.3	5.7	4.9	1.7	3.84%
Italy	50	17	12	5.25%	4.85%	2.19%	3.2	1.0	2.5	1.5	1.87%
German Dem. Rep.	44	15	12	5.24%	3.14%	3.07%			2.4	1.7	1.27%
United Kingdom	27	14	11	3.23%	3.39%	3.42%	2.0	2.3	2.8	1.8	1.62%
Ireland	36	15	11	4.28%	4.33%	2.42%	2.8	1.9	4.0	2.4	1.87%
Germany, Fed. Rep.	40	16	11	4.48%	5.21%	2.42%	3.0	1.8	2.5	1.4	2.12%
Denmark	25	11	11	4.02%	0.00%	4.56%	2.2	2.5	2.6	1.5	2.02%
Spain	56	15	11	6.37%	4.33%	2.42%	4.1	1.2	2.9	1.7	1.96%
Australia	25	14	10	2.86%	4.69%	2.71%	2.2	1.4	3.3	1.8	2.22%
France	34	13	10	4.69%	3.68%	2.71%	3.7	0.6	2.9	1.8	1.75%
Hong Kong	65	14	10	7.39%	4.69%	2.71%	6.2	4.8	5.3	1.7	4.12%
Canada	33	13	9	4.55%	5.12%	1.91%	3.3	1.6	3.6	1.6	2.74%
Netherlands	22	11	9	3.41%	2.83%	3.07%	2.7	0.6	3.1	1.5	2.65%
Norway	23	11	8	3.62%	4.45%	2.19%	3.6	3.5	2.9	1.7	1.96%
Switzerland	27	11	8	4.39%	4.45%	2.19%	1.5	1.4	2.5	1.6	1.64%
Japan	40	13	8	5.46%	6.70%	1.02%	5.1	3.1	2.0	1.7	0.60%
Finland	28	9	7	5.52%	3.53%	2.56%	3.6	2.1	2.6	1.6	1.56%
Sweden	20	9	7	3.91%	3.53%	2.56%	2.0	1.7	2.3	1.6	1.11%